

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: August 6, 2015

Agenda Item: 2015Elk Plan Objective Adjustments

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Proposed

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 30 minutes

Background

The population objectives in Montana's elk plan were established by commission action in 2005 with some adjusted since. Changes were anticipated in the original document, which allows for any proposed change of merit to be forwarded to the commission for consideration in August as a proposal for public comment. FWP is proposing elk plan adjustments in two areas: the Bob Marshall Elk Management Unit (EMU) in the South and Middle Forks of the Flathead and the Swan (HDs 130, 140, 141, 150 and 151), and the Bitterroot Valley (HDs 204, 240, 250, 260, 261, 262 and 270) (Table 1). From a management standpoint there is no reason why elk in the Bob Marshall EMU that winter mostly on public land need to be considered over objective, which they have been recently. Proposed changes in the Bitterroot are designed to better reflect the situation on the ground and facilitate management while slightly increasing the valley-wide objective from 7,470 to 7,550.

Table 1. Proposed elk plan adjustments for 2015.

HD	Current Objectives		Proposed Objectives	
	Numbers	Ratios per 100 Cows	Numbers	Ratios per 100 Cows
130, 140 & 141	225	None	150-320	None
150 & 151	400	None	310-500	None
204	1,320 for 204 &	25 Calves & 10 bulls	600	20-30 calves & 15 bulls
261	261 Combined	25 Calves & 10 bulls	700	20-30 calves & 15 bulls
240	750	25 Calves	1000	20-30 calves
250	2000	25 Calves & 15 Bulls	1400	30-40 Calves & 25 Bulls
260	None		50	None
262	None		0	None
270*	3400	25 Calves & 15 Bulls	3800	20-30 Calves & 20 Bulls
Bitterroot Total	7470		7550	

*The HD 270 proposal also would raise the subobjective for elk on publically accessible land (i.e. not on the CB Ranch) from 2,600 to 3,000.

Public Involvement Process & Results

The Region 1 proposals will be vetted with Flathead Wildlife Inc. Those in Region 2 were vetted at public meetings on July 7-8 where 35 people attended, including members of the Ravalli County Fish and Wildlife Association. Public comment will be open until Sept. 7.

Alternatives and Analysis

None considered.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends the commission adopt for public comment the proposed elk plan adjustments

Proposed Motion

I move the Fish & Wildlife Commission adopt the proposed elk plan adjustments in Regions 1 and 2 as presented by FWP.